

Six Common Lightning Myths

- 1.) **Lightning never strikes twice.** It strikes the Empire State Building in New York City between 22-25 times each year.
- 2.) **Rubber tires or foam pad will insulate me from lightning.** It takes about 10,000 volts to create a one-inch spark. Lightning has millions of volts and easily can jump 10-12 feet.
- 3.) **Lightning rods will protect my house or outdoor festivities.** Lightning rods are “preferential attachment points” for lightning. You do not want to “draw” lightning to any area with people nearby.
- 4.) **We should get off the water when boating, canoeing or sailing.** Tall trees and rocky outcrops along the shore and on nearby land may be a more dangerous place.
- 5.) **A cave is a safe place in a thunderstorm.** If it is a shallow cave or old mine with metallic filings nearby, it can be a deadly location during lightning.
- 6.) **Injured persons carry an electrical charge.** Injured persons do not carry an electrical charge and can be handled safely. Apply First Aid including CPR (if you are qualified) procedures to a lightning victim. Call 911 and send for help immediately.

Did You Know?

The National Weather Service reports that 85% of lightning victims are children and young men between the ages of 10-35 engaged in recreational activities. The NWS reports that 25% of the strike victims die.

Approximately 40% of the strike locations are unreported. Of those reported, about 27% are open fields and recreational areas, other than golf courses. In those reported locations (other than golf courses), approximately 14% of the people stand under trees. Golf courses account for about 5% of the lightning strike locations. Other common locations are heavy equipment, telephone, radio transmitter or antenna related.

Research shows that sequential lightning strikes can be 6-8 miles apart.

Safety Tips

If outdoors avoid water, high ground or open spaces.

If indoors avoid water, doors and windows, take head sets off and do not use telephones.

Suspend outdoor activities for 30 minutes after the last observed lightning strike.

Caught outside – crouch down, put your feet together and place your hands over your ears to minimize hearing damage from thunder. Seek clumps of scrubs or trees of uniform height or seek ditches, trenches or low ground. Just be aware that if there is rain, a ditch may quickly fill with water.